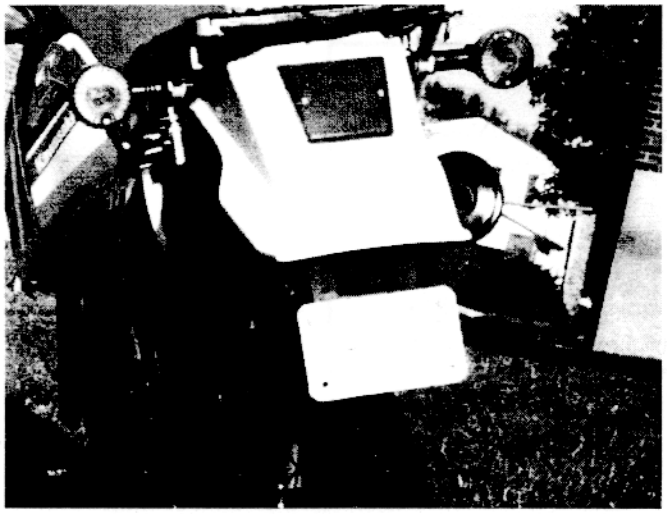
Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News

March/April 1997

MOTO MUSING

Gino Pokluda

I have been know to read a few motorcycles magazines. Well, maybe more than a few. Okay, okay, okay, I read a lot of motorcycle magazines. To be honest, after a while they all seem to fade and blend into each other with nothing really striking standing out. What's more, is that the reviews of bikes and gear usually don't even come close to my passions. The past couple of months have been the exception, however, with great articles appearing in *Rider*, *Motorcycle Consumer News*, and *Cycle World*.



The article in the January issue of *Rider* is about a fellow who traveled through Utah on his KLR650. It's one of those great "Chamber of Commerce" articles that we all like to read and hopefully visit someday. The *Cycle World* article is actually Peter Eagan's Leanings column. In the February 1997 issue, Peter tries to address the age old question, "How many motorcycles does a rider need?" while sucking down margaritas in a small cantina in Mexico (an enviable task, indeed). The February issue of *Motorcycle Consumer News*, however, wins the "Keeper Award" for its three great articles, one of which is a 25,000 mile assessment of the KLR650 another being a great editorial on the "less is more" concept by Lee Parks and finally the quality review of the BMW F650ST. Lee tells us how he and the test F650ST are able to stick to a hopped up sport bike like white on rice while scratching through a canyon and the sport bike rider insists that the F650ST has been breathed upon. Of course we all know that in the curves, light is right and ponies mean nothing, it's torque that counts.

While at first glance the articles in these magazines may seem very different, there is actually a common thread that runs through them. I don't need to tell anyone reading this that motorcycles in general have enjoyed a long and fruitful existence in America. But somewhere along the way, the marketers of motorcycle manufacturers have sold us the bill of goods by telling us we need big bikes to do big things. I have often believed that anything over 650cc is a waste. I just don't believe that you need 1000+ cc's or 100+ horses to get the job done between point A and point B. So when every motorcycle mag was lusting with the Honda Black Bird, I simply yawned; bigger is not always better in my book.

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This brings me to my next point about multiple bikes. I am sentenced to always owning more than one bike. Lord knows I admire people who can own one bike and basically marry the thing for tens of thousands of miles. I, unfortunately, like a little variety in my riding life which is feasible mostly because of my '650 or less' philosophy. When you prefer mid-displacement bikes, owning more than one bike becomes far more forgiving on the wallet in terms of buy-in price and insurance.

So what does any of this have to do with KL650 dual sport bikes? Well, by putting a KL in the garage, you basically take care of your touring, dual sport and utility needs with one bike and you can focus on the sport bike, cruiser or project bike desires you may have. So do these articles mean that the American motorcycle press has come to its senses and realizes that bigger is not always better? That dual sports offer the biggest bang got the buck around - I hope so, but I wouldn't bet any money on it.

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FROM THE READERS

Readers, please keep those letters coming. I'll try to get them all published when and where space permits. Thanks - Ed.

Ever since I purchased my '96 KLR650 last August, I've been searching everywhere for specialized hop-up info. All I read is "it's a compromise" or "it's OK on the street and lousy in the dirt". Well it (KLR650) suits me just fine, thank you, and it's fast enough for me in the dirt , too!

If you can recommend an exhaust that's not too loud & rejetting parts for the carb, I'd really appreciate it. (Mine surges at part throttle, all speeds) - Also tires that might be better than the stock ones, thanks.

Gary Leese

I'm with you, Gary. The KLR is a great bike for me and does everything I care for it to do. The April issue of ***Cycle World*** *did a Baja ride on dual sports, guess which one got left out, yep, the KLR. I hope to have an issue that discusses exhaust systems in the near future. While I will talk about Cobra and SuperTrapp, I hope to focus more on Staintune, Laser Pro-Duro, and the system being manufactured by Quality Engine R&D. These promise to be much better quality than the typical Cobra and SuperTrapp units. You can replace your needle with the KLX650C needle which is adjustable or Factory and Dynojet both make complete jet kits for the KLR650 and are available from your local dealer. As far as tires go, I do not hide my bias to the IRC GP110. It wears well, behaves itself on pavement, is pretty good for off-road work and is inexpensive to boot. The Avon Gripster is also quickly becoming a favorite of mine. It is more street oriented and a little more expensive than the GP110, but is a great value. - Ed.*

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I don't have my KLR650 yet, I will be picking it up in Georgia at the end of February. It will be replacing my '88 BMW R100GS. I made the switch after a lot of study and question asking. The GS had features I thought were important. Tubeless tires, shaft drive, ease of adjusting and maintenance. I'm sure you know what I found out. Just because tubeless tires can be plugged and ridden , when you dismount the tire on a trail, it's sometimes impossible to get enough air fast enough to re-seat the bead! Shaft drive is great until you need a new universal joint out in the wilds of Patagonia. Ease of maintenance means you just fix and over and over and over - not at all like my Goldwing that needs fresh oil and a tire check every now and then.

The GS served me well on last years Pancho Villa Tour to Tierra del Fuego. The KLR'ers on the trip checked their oil and tires and then went on to supper. We GS'ers usually found something to putt with. I plan on going on next years Pancho Villa tour. I will be mounting Givi luggage -2 or 3 pieces, an after market seat, right now Russell looks pretty good. A skid plate, fork and disc protectors, bark busters, and a taller windshield. A tank bag will be great and hoping for info to turn up in the *K 650 DSN* before I leave in September.

Bryan Banks

As a former GS rider myself, I must agree with your assessment, though the R80GS Paris Dakar was one of my all-time favorite bikes. Sounds like your headed in the right direction with the modifications. We'll be interested to see how that Russell seat works out. - Ed.

NEW STUFF

KLR650 LOWERING KITS

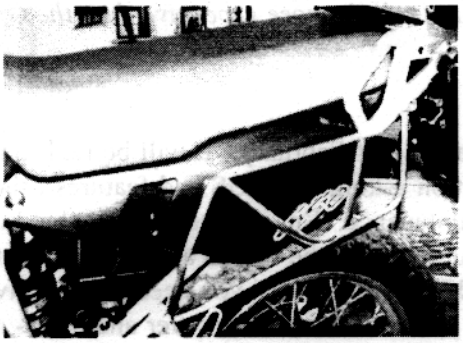
Shortly after the last issue of *K 650 DSN* was mailed, Steve Kesselring of Quality Engine R&D saw the need for a lowering kit for the KLR650. Two months later, we have the KLR650 lowering kit. The 'kit' consists of a new set of rear shock linkages that are longer which position the rear shock at a shallow angle thus lowering the rear of the bike. The linkages, or 'dog bones' as we call them, are machined from high quality aluminum stock

and polished. When I first saw them, I thought I would rather buy a set and put them in the china cabinet instead of underneath a dual sport. But these are much stouter than any OEM component offered by Kawasaki, that's the way Steve builds things which says a lot.

The rule is that what you do the rear of the bike, you must also do to the front. To lower the KLR650, you need to raise your fork tube in the triple clamps and 'bump' the preload on the rear shock a step or two. Once all that is done, you've lowered the bike about 1.5 inches. The sidestand remains the same and you may want to check chain tension. If you need the bike even lower, you can order a Corbin seat which shaves about two additional inches from the seat height or have your seat cut down.

K 650 DSN has bought several sets of these kits and is offering them at the introductory price of $68.00 which includes shipping to its readers. Lowering kits are also available directly from **Quality Engine R&D (717)596-3030** and from **Dual Star (206)776-7433**.

KLR650 SIDE RACKS



Later in the issue, you will see the article on soft luggage and how useful and versatile it can be. One of the problems that has plagued users of soft luggage for years has been supporting the bags, tying them down and keeping them from rubbing on body work. Tim Bernard of Drive Line Service in Boise, Idaho has solved that problem for the KLR650 owner. Tim designed and has been successfully marketing side racks for the KLR650 for a few years now. The racks are made from high strength steel hydraulic tubing and attach to the luggage rack and passenger foot peg mount bolts. The racks follow the contour of the bikes side cover and provide ample tie down locations for whatever you have. The racks are designed to carry the saddle bags in the location of where a passenger would sit and not over the muffler. Those wishing to carry saddle bags over the muffler will need to come up with a muffler shield of their own.

Tim assures me that these racks are crash worth and have seen a great deal of off-road use and abuse. For more information on these nifty racks call Tim Bernard at **Drive Line Service**, 7646 Lemhi St. #1, Boise, Idaho 83709, **(208)377-8770**.

PARTS THROUGH *K 650 DSN*

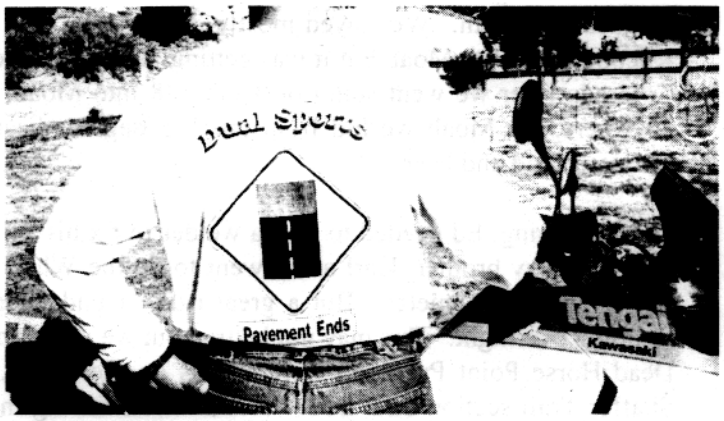
You can now order parts for your Kawasaki 650 dual sport by phone from **R&S Kawasaki** in Albuquerque, New Mexico. *K 650 DSN* subscribers will receive a 10% discount and R&S has KLR knowledgeable parts folks behind the counter which is always a plus. Phone in your parts order with a credit card and have your order UPS delivered to your door. To order parts call **(505)292-6692**, ask for the parts department and tell them you are a subscriber to *Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News*.

OTHER PLANS

I also hope to be at the BMW MOA National Rally in Fredicksburg, TX, June 24-27 and the Four Stroke Singles National Owners Club Thumper Rally at Captains Cove, WI, September 3-4.

K 650 DSN T-SHIRTS ARE HERE!

Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport T-shirts are here. They are long sleeve 50/50 shirts in a light ash color. The front has the Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport logo as seen on the front page of the Nov/Dec issue of the Newsletter in traditional Kawasaki blue and green. The back has the official Pavement Ends highway warning sign in yellow and black. An eye catching shirt to say the least. T-shirts are $14.50 + $3.50 for shipping. Send check to made to **Gino Pokluda** to **Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News, PO Box 698, Sandia Park, NM 87047.**



ON THE ROAD

Southwest Touring **Ron Kellner**

Gino,

I thought you might like to hear about our Colorado adventure. Not surprisingly we used four-stroke singles KLR 650's to be exact. We had an 89,92, 94 and a new 95 in the trailer when we left Buffalo, New York in late June of 95. Two days or so of driving got us to my niece's house in Monument, Colorado. The four of us were about the same age, 50, but ranged from very experienced to not very experienced.

We went off-road about two miles from the start and headed up the Rampart Range road toward Bates Park. My buddy, Ed Idng, had planned most of the trip via Delorme maps and Map-N-Go CD ROM. We left with detailed route sheets and even motel reservations each night. The plan was to keep to the dirt as much as possible and hit as many of the high passes as possible. However, it was still snowing on the Fourth of July and most of those wonderful passes were still under 8-10 feet of snow.

Heading out from Estes park we aimed for the Wyoming border on well graded dirt roads. Looping back south after touching Wyoming. We discovered that Buffalo Pass was closed. This was the first of many detours around closed passes. Fortunately, blasting pavement on the KLR's is great fun and we reached Steamboat Springs in time for a shower, cocktails and dinner. Pounding that same pavement on my other bike, an XL600R would have been like a self inflicted wound.

Day three put us on the pavement toward Breckenridge. The paved passes were open but it was cold on top of Loveland where we watched folks sliding. Mosquito Pass was on the menu for the next day but calls to the Park Ranger confirmed that it was closed. So we headed over Cumberland Pass to Como than 100 miles down a fine dirt road to Salida. We cut the day short and went directly up to Mt. Princeton hot springs when our not-so-experienced guy got sore from a small faceplant. Well more like a shoulder flop. The hot spring fed pool felt really great.

We went up the road to take a peak at Tin Cup Pass. No luck, so we back tracked and went over Cottonwood Pass to Taylor Park then into Tin Cup. We highly recommend lunch at Freachy's Cafe. Especially, their deserts. The rest of the afternoon was a real long ride. First, south Cumberland Pass to Pitkin then Parlia. Further south than west over Los Pinos and Slumgullion Passes to Lake City. Without a whole lot of daylight left we headed up over Engineers Pass which had been opened by a dozer. The road became a stream bed of run-off. However, we managed o.k. with dual-sport tires (Metzler Sahara's in my case). We were really happy to get off the bikes in Ouray and into a hot tub.

Telluride being unreachable via Iuiogene or Black Bear Passes, we headed North to Ridgeway then west and onto dirt heading north. We stayed mostly on dirt to Grand Junction and a late lunch. We had planned to ride the Kocopelli Trail to Moab but it was getting late in the afternoon and it was HOT. Stopping to cool our feet in the Colorado river we went south on Utah 128 into Moab. Rte 128 is as pretty a piece of pavement as your find anywhere. In Moab we hid from the 115 degree heat in the air-conditioned motel until it was time to find Mexican food and beer.

In the morning, Ed needed to find a welder to fix his shift lever and Dennis needed to rest his sore, shoulder and chest. So my brother, Karl and I went to do the White Rim Trail. Yep - It got Hot, about 106 degrees on my zipper-pull thermometer. But a great ride. I understand that Jeeps can't do the loop in one day and end up camping overnight. This may not be true but we did it on the bikes in seven hours round trip. 150 miles including Dead Horse Point Park and Pucker Pass on the return. The trip was much easier than when I had done the Shaffer Trail section on a BMW R100/7 with fairing in 1982. Had to watch the temp gauge on the KLR as it started to get pretty far to the right.

The following morning we were asked whether we were part of the Marlboro bike group that was in town. No, we only look like Marlboro Men. We managed to stay on a pretty dirt road back into Colorado. At Gateway we hit Route 141 and took an easy ride back to Ouray were we discovered the Bon-Ton Restaurant in the Ouray Hotel - superb food.

The plan was to go back over Engineers Pass to Lake City then head south. Once was enough on the KLR's given the conditions and besides Karl and Dennis had never seen Silverton the Million Dollar Highway and Durango. This was quickly remedied before heading east on Route160. At Pagosa Springs we headed south on 84 into Chama, New Mexico so that we could add another state. Route 17 over La Magna Pass brought us to Antonito for the night. Sorry to say it isn't much of a town, steam train railroad not withstanding.

Day ten saw us heading for Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Medano Pass. After 4 or 5 miles of deep exhausting sand we encountered a dozen water crossings. Cautious so as not to drown a bike we ended up wandering around in knee deep water finding the best routes and spotting each other. Great fun. While having lunch in Silver Uiff it started to rain furiously. We waited and got fooled and soaked anyway on the way toward Canon City. Cripple Creek was crossed off our list because the road north from Route. 50 was washed out. So we jumped on Route 115 and headed for the finish in Monument.

We covered 2310 miles in ten days, and half of that off-road. Ed had a water pump seal go in Salida and we replaced it in the parking lot at Mt. Princeton. Other than none of the bikes as much as hiccuped. Dammed impressive. I hereby nominate the Kawasaki KLR650 as the most versatile motorcycle you can buy. The BMW GS maybe better for two-up or mostly pavement and I have a lot of miles on them but overall I'll stand by the KLR. For this trip the generous gas capacity was essential.

Now for serious flying over just the nicest passes my XR600R would be big time fun. But overall considering about half our mileage was pavement we had the right equipment. What a trip!

Notes on Mods to the 1994 KLR650:
- Race-Tech Gold Valves and Progressive springs
- Works Performance rear shock
- Center stand
- Dynoject kit and K&N air cleaner
- Metzeler Sahara Tires - great!
- Braking rear disc
- New color scheme - white and red
- Corbin seat

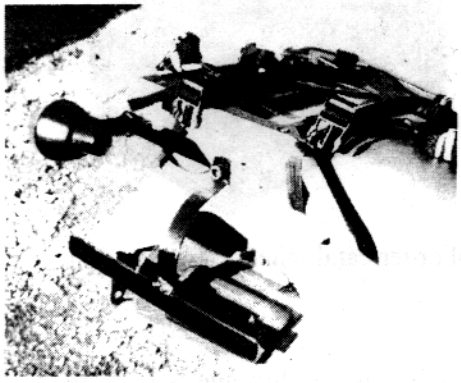
Luggage:
- Rev-Pack seat pack

SOFT LUGGAGE

Gino Pokluda

While writing the article on hard luggage for the November/December issue, I thought to myself that nobody could possibly want anything other than hard lockable luggage for their bike. Needless to say, I was wrong. I soon began getting calls, letters and e-mail from readers who didn't want hard luggage but would rather have soft luggage. There were many reasons; less expensive, more choice, and easier to adapt, to name a few. Easier to repair and less apt to get damaged in the event of a fall were others. So with these stalwart soft luggage users in mind, I set out to investigate the options available to the KL650 rider and all dual sport riders for that matter. It didn't take long to realize that there are countless motorcycle specific soft luggage options waiting for the KL owner. If you add outdoor gear bags, duffles and dry bags available from most outdoor shops to that equation, the options become infinite.

I started by removing the Givi bags and their mounts from my KLR650 and getting the bike 'back-to-basics'. I had an old set of Eclipse Sport Bike bags collecting dust in the garage and decided I would try to put them on the KLR and live with the soft bag setup for awhile.



On the KLR650 and the Tengai, the typical soft bag user will encounter two obstacles; the rear turn signals and the muffler. The KLR and Tengai have probably the best luggage rack in the industry except for one little detail, the turn signals are located smack dab in the middle of the rack sides. This poses a problem for some bags that hang over the side. Curiously, the Tengai has a small set of set backs that locate the turn signals closer to the end of the rack, but still in a position that would interfere with side bags hanging off of the rack. To remedy this problem, I made a couple of turn signal set-backs from some 1.5" steel strap stock. I cut two 8 inch pieces and drilled a 10mm hole at each end. I removed the turn signals and soldered in 8 inches of 16 gauge wire to give added length. Splicing connectors could be used, but soldering provides a better connection where there is lots of vibration. I bolted the setbacks to the rack using the existing turn signal holes and 10mm nuts and bolts purchase from the hardware store. I then located the turn signals on the ends of the setbacks and presto, my turn signals were now lined up with the back of the luggage rack making plenty of room for saddle bags to hang over the sides.

The muffler was more a little more challenging than relocating the turn signals. I decided that I would make a simple support that would bolt to the luggage rack and form a brace that would keep the bag away from the muffler. I used the same 1.5 inch steel strap stock that I used for my set-backs for the turn signals. I bent one piece of stock to curve out away from the bike. I then welded a piece perpendicular to the curved piece to form a sort of upside-down 'T' which would support the length of the bag and prevent it from flopping onto the muffler. I finished the brace as I did the turn signal setbacks with high-temp black paint. Total time took about four hours and total cost, including bolts, 1.5" steel strap stock, wire for the turn signals and paint was about $10.00.

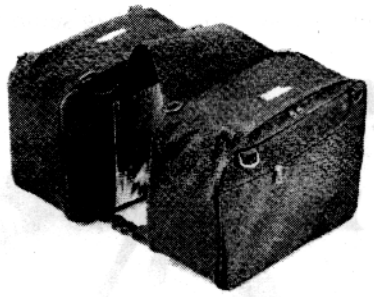
Some readers have simply used spacers and longer bolts to move the existing heat shield away from the muffler. Others have sandwiched fiberglass insulation in between aluminum flashing and used large hose clamps to attach it to the muffler. The point here is that keeping your precious cargo from frying against the hot muffler is limited only by your imagination.

Once you get the turn signal and muffler details worked out, the sky is the limit in choosing saddlebags and other luggage. The only factors at this point are capacity, style and most important, money. I have decided to include what I thought would be good choices in saddle bags and duffles for dual sporting. This is not to say that this evaluation is exhaustive, but more to spark your imagination when choosing luggage for your machine. For consistency purposes, I will be using liters as the unit of measure when comparing the different luggage. If you would like to compare the capacity of your current luggage with that which is discussed in this article, simply measure the depth, width, and length of your current luggage in inches. Multiply all three measurements together and divide by 61.024.

Example: 6" * 12" * 16" = 1152 cubic inches 1152 cubic inches / 61.024 = 18.8 liters

Chase Harper

Chase Harper is well known for producing some of the best soft luggage around. If you ever doubt that, just call Ron Harper, owner of Chase Harper. "If one of my products fails, regardless of whose fault it is, I'll repair it at no charge," Ron will tell you. I have had the pleasure of owning several Chase Harper items and can attest their durability and quality. I have used the 'barrel bag' and the small 'fender bag' both of which work great as large spare tube carriers or tool bags. Chase Harper makes a specific set of bags for dual sports called the **Dual Sport Saddle Bags**. These bags have a heat resistant membrane that resembles foil on the back side of each bag. This aluminized fabric is only heat resistant., however, and cannot be used as the sole protection against a hot muffler or exhaust pipe. Ron recommends at least four inches of air space between any saddle bag and the exhaust system. The Dual Sport Saddle Bags provide about 24 liters of cargo capacity, come in Black, Red, Blue and Purple and cost $189.99 and are available from your local dealer or mail order catalogue.



Eclipse

Eclipse is the other big name in town as far as soft luggage is concerned. Like Chase Harper, Eclipse produces a number of tank bags, utility bags and soft saddle bags all of varying capacities. One of the more intriguing pieces of luggage made by Eclipse is its **Sport Bike Saddlebags and Duffel** combo. I purchased this set originally for my TDM850 and found it to be quite versatile and well made. With about 52 liters total capacity, this combo will accommodate enough gear for a week long trip. The side packs are wedge shaped and mated to a smallish tail pack. The whole unit mounts to the bike via Fastex buckles and nylon straps. The purpose of the wedge shaped side packs is to make plenty of room for the upswept exhaust found on most sport bikes. This proves ideal for dual sports keeping the side bags narrow, lean and close to the bike. The duffel is a separate piece and straps to the pack set with dedicated straps and loops. This luggage would not be usable in two-up riding situations. Although I like this setup, I found it cumbersome to use due to the number of small compartments and the strange shape of the side packs. For the weekend traveler, however, this setup could be the ticket.

Another fine product from Eclipse is the **P38 Saddle Bags**. These are also wedge shaped to accommodate upswept exhaust but have a 30 liter combined capacity. These are simple throw overs and have close to 40 liters total capacity. If you are looking for full size bags from Eclipse, then the **Interstate Saddle Packs** are for you. Top loading with two large outside pockets each, the Insterstates will swallow a combined 64 liters of cargo. All Eclipse products have a large strip of 3M reflective tape on each saddle bag for added visibility. Eclipse bags and accessories are available from your local dealer.

Aerostitch

Best known for their riding suits, Aerostitch also makes soft luggage suitable for dual sports. The **Courier** and **Dispatch** saddle bags offered by Aerostitch are derived from their very functional Courier and Dispatch shoulder bags. They simple sewed on compression straps and velcro straps so that two bags can function as throw-overs. I own a Courier shoulder bag and consider it to be a very well made piece of luggage, so the saddle bag versions should be just as good if not better. Heavy stitching is used at all stress points and the bag material is the same Cordura used in the Roadcrafter riding suits. The bags are lined with a bright yellow fabric to make it easy to identify small objects hiding deep in the bag. The Dispatch bag will hold a combined 28 liters of cargo while the Courier bags will hold about 40 liters combined. Both bags are available in gray or black and have a large 3M reflective strip across the top flap.

Unfortunately, probably the best bags in the Aerostitch catalogue are no longer available. The 'Dry Bags' once offered appeared to be the simplest yet most versatile bag around. Aerostitch gave no reason why the bags were no longer available. You can contact **Aerostitch RiderWearhouse** at **(800)222-1994**.

Moto Fizz

If you have never heard of Moto Fizz, don't worry, neither had I until I perused a MPS catalogue, a parts catalogue from Britain. The Moto Fizz product claimed to be the best soft luggage 'system' available. The price was right and they took VISA, so I figured why not. While I was at it, I ordered some other items and faxed my order in. Four weeks later to the day my order arrived. After examining the Moto Fizz luggage system which included rain covers, shoulder straps, and the harness that stays with the bike, I knew I had purchased some quality stuff. The saddlebags are smallish with a combined capacity of 24 Liters. While that may sound tiny, the bags are just right for commuting and detach easily from the bike harness. You can easily fit a gallon of milk and other goodies into one bag and cinch it up with the built in compression straps. The bags are simple in design and load from the top.

The Variable Seat Bag is the real coup in this set up. Hardly a day goes by when someone doesn't comment on the bags uniqueness and quality. The bag expands in two directions from 23 Liters to 41 Liters. Unlike most other seat bags, the Moto Fizz item loads from the top and has loads of compression straps, 'D' rings and a sturdy handle if

you choose not to use the standard shoulder strap. Moto Fizz gets low marks in the visibility category with no reflective material anywhere on the bags. You can fax your request for a catalogue to **MPS** at **11 44 1626 83 6666**

Brand X

So you say that the name brand stuff is well and good, but your prefer to keep things low budget. Well, then look no farther than the latest J.C. Whitney Motorcycle catalogue. While some may be quick to pass judgement on this discount parts and accessories warehouse, I have had nothing but good luck with their products. I practically rebuilt a Yamaha XS650 from parts bought from J.C. Whintey and never had a problem.

JC Whitney sells a number of different styles of soft saddlebags as well as tank bags, tail packs and duffles. I purchased a waterproof duffel a number of years ago which was quickly commandeered by my wife for camping gear. It has held up well with some very hard use and yes, it is water proof, don't ask, just take my word for it. you can order a **J.C. Whitney** catalogue by calling **(312)431-6102**.

On Top

Okay, so you got your side bags taken care of, now you need something to strap to that hefty luggage rack on the back. There are tons of options here with bags available from Walmart to LL Bean. If you can't find something that meets your needs, I don't want to know you. Thirty dollars will get you a water resistant duffel that will carry 45 liters of stuff. Cabelas, Campmor, Gander Mountain and any other camping equipment outlet worth its salt will be able to supply you with a large road worthy bag. Dry bags such as those made for rafting outfitters are also nice and don't need rain covers. If you absolutely must have a bag that is a specific size, Wave Products will be glad to make one for you in any dimensions you want. Wave products is located in Salt Lake City, Utah and Greg is the man to talk to. You can reach Greg at **Wave Products** at **(801)466-6061**.

Straps

The manner in which luggage is attached to a bike is probably more important than the luggage itself. That super nice set of bags or that custom duffel won't mean much when it's lying on the road and your speeding off toward the horizon thinking it's still attached. I personally do not put much faith in bungee cords and nets. Don't get me wrong, they both have there place, but it's not serving as the sole means of attachment to a bike. I prefer to use nylon web strap with cam-lock or Fastex style buckles. Ounce per ounce there are no other materials that can provide the strength and durability of nylon web strap. Most camping outlets or mountaineering shops will have a good supply of strapping and buckles. A carpet needle, some carpet thread and an evening in front of the TV will yield custom made straps if you inclined to make your own. If you'd rather buy pre-made straps, **Granite Gear** will be more than happy to sell you some in two weights of strap and an array of buckle types. You can reach Granite Gear at **(800)545-9321** in Barre, Vermont.

Bike Belt

Have you ever seen a product that was so ingenious, so useful, so practical that you thought for sure you would see it on every bike on the road? I thought so when I first saw the Bike Belt at the BMW rally in Durango, Colorado. The Bike Belt is a thick nylon web strap that attaches to the area around the passenger foot pegs via Fastex buckles and included hardware. The belt goes over the seat and attaches to the other set of hardware near the passenger foot peg on the other side of the bike. All along this thick strap are sewn heavy duty 'D' rings which serve as additional attachment points for items strapped to the back of the bike. With these extra attachment points, a person could get much better angles for cinching down gear on the bike making your load tighter and safer. What's even better is that you can order extra mounting hardware for other bikes in the garage

and then the Bike Belt could be moved from bike to bike with ease. Bike Belts come in one size fits all from **BB Products, (800)314-1593**. Approximate cost for a Bike Belt is $33.00.

READERS TIPS

THE CAMPING ARTICLE

Text and photos by Dave Jakeman

Gino has asked me to share some of the things I've learned regarding motorcycle travel and camping out. This is to be the first of perhaps four articles, but if there are sufficient complaints, maybe not. Many of you may find some of my observations elementary or redundant: my methods may not be the best way, but they're **a way,** and may suggest a different approach to the one you may already use. I hope to be helpful to those members who need a place to start.

First, think of your bike as a pack frame with tires. Weight isn't as much a consideration as with backpacking, but SIZE IS! I'm using two 1500 Pelican bags, a small tank bag, and a 14Xl4X28 Wave Products duffel bag.

Friends and acquaintances know me as a Great Maker Of Lists; my trip checklist is divided into tasks; the headings are: I Ride Out, To Buy, I Tour, I Camp, I Bed Down. Because we have a ride scheduled fairly soon, This article will concentrate on "I Camp" because most of you already know what to take on the usual day ride. This list is loosely organized in the order of use.

Solo Shower bag
Ditty & Kitchen bag
Camp stove and fuel
Pot set
Food bag and thermos bottle
Sleeping gear & scuffs
Insect repellent & flashlight
Wipes and toilet tissue

I lube my chain as soon as I get the duffel off the bike; always lube a warm chain, never adjust a dry chain before you lube it. I start my water going for dinner, then wash and make my bed while the water heats up. I get out of my boots and pull my camp scuffs on, eat and clean up, then I get into my warmups, and I'm ready for bed in under an hour. At the midday fuel stop, I filled my Solo Shower bag and slipped it under a bungee net atop my load; Warm water by evening, to wash with.

I hang my solo shower, and get my stove out, and start some water for dinner. At the last gas stop I filled my thermos with coffee for the morning, and bought a quart of milk for my breakfast groats; that way I don't necessarily have to cook when I get up. While the water boils I clear an area for my bed; put down the ground sheet, mattress pad, sleeping bag, and rig my shelter half. I seldom use a tent; if the weather makes one necessary, I usually stay home. I have used a tent on longer vacation trips, mainly as a place to leave my bed and clothes in the campground while I take lightly loaded day rides. Find a camp site in view of the host trailer, use a small padlock in the zipper pull, and your load will seldom be bothered.

Avoid stoves that use LP fuel in disposable bottles; my favorites are the old style Optimus and Svea types. I've never run short of fuel if I fill the stove at home and carry both Sigg bottles. A search for firewood usually chews up the campground, and the fire makes a mess of your pots. Backpacker pouch food is neat, although pricey; I usually buy Lipton Noodles and Sauce, and similar stuff at the grocery store. For breakfasts, at home I fill a gallon zip bag with a mixture of breakfast cereals, bran, seeds, and raisins.

I try to avoid motels and restaurants. They all look the same on the inside; I go for the outdoor experience. Lunchtime finds me in the local grocery store; my meal consists of a deli salad, thin sliced chicken or turkey, a

bottle of juice, a piece of fruit, etc. I ask the girl at the checkout where the city park is, and that's where I eat. I always carry tortillas; they pack flat, and unlike bread, don't get mashed up in my load. I make a couple of cold burritos with the meat and salad. The city park gives me the flow and flavor of the community; unavailable in the cafe.

My clothing includes my scuffs and cotton warmups for sleeping. I used to carry moccasins, but now I take raft shoes, such as Nike Aqua Sox; they pack flat, and are the best slipper when a midnight trip to the sandbox is necessary. Change of clothing includes 3 sox, two skivvies, one T-shirt. By the time I run out of changes, I'm usually ready for a motel shower AND a Laundromat. I wear the warmups while my jeans are in the machine.

In camp, after you eat, gather up all the scraps and wrappers and put them in the supermarket bag you saved from lunch, and put it in the can, or hang it away from your campsite.

Wash your pots, and bag your food. Then WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY before you pack your food and pots away. If you get any food scents on your load or bag, the campground raccoons will keep you awake all night, as the ones at Bandalier did me. That's one reason I prefer hard bags; the critters will chew holes in your soft luggage to get at something to eat.

I carry a balaclava and a stocking cap to sleep in; you lose a large percentage of body heat through your head. Wet your hands with DEET and apply some to the cap, and around the drawstring area of your bag. I arrange my jeans in the toe of the bag, and put my glasses and a small flashlight in my scuffs near the bag.

I drank half of my milk with dinner; next morning I use the remainder in my groats, I drink my coffee, and gather up my bed. I fetch the dinner garbage bag I hung in the tree, load up and head out.

I try to put the heavier stuff low on the bike; the PelBags get water and fluids, tools and spares, Fix-a-Flat, thermos bottle, EMT kit, and the like. Light, fluffy stuff like clothes and bedroll goes into the duffel. The tank bag gets camera and binoculars, lip balm, sunscreen, trip log and maps, and the like.

Some specific recommendations, if you're just starting out. Stainless pot sets and rainsuits from REI are hard to beat. If you're looking for a compact camera, the Yashica T-4 Super with the data back is my choice; although it isn't a zoom, it's weatherproof, and has a real Zeiss lens. I'm using a Tour Master TB-12 tied off with a pair of Quick Clips from Chase Harper; it's slender enough to clear my knees when I'm on the pegs. A word of caution about bungee cords; I've lost count of the number I've seen out along the roadside, lying there like so many dead snakes. I use a nylon strap with a camlock buckle to secure my duffel; I've never heard of one failing in service. I'm going to try to get my complete list together by the time this issue gets out; those members making the Moab ride can call me at (801) 387-5575 and give me a fax number; I think I can get the whole thing to you. Stay safe!

TECH TIPS

Expanded Tech Tips

Steve Kesselering of Quality Engine R&D and KLR727 fame has volunteered to have a question and answer column in *K 650 DSN*. For now, if you have questions regarding technical aspects of your KL650, send them to *K 650 DSN* and we will get them answered for you. We can't guarantee all questions will be printed in the *K 650 DSN*, but I will make sure you get an answer.

Steve,
I have an oil leak at the counter shaft. Manual does not show a shaft seal. Also, when taking off at low RPMs I get heavy engine vibration.

Bill Bellman

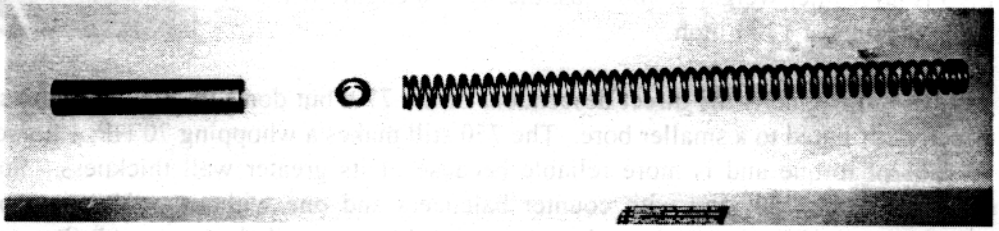
Bill.
There are actually two seals at the counter shaft. A small O-ring slides down the shaft into a seat inside the engine cases. A sleeve goes over that and then the large seal. The counter shaft is pressure fed and any failure in the o-ring will result in and oil leak. Heavy engine vibes at low RPM could indicated a loose cam chain or failure of the cam chain tensioner. Sometimes the key slot on the shaft tends to get sloppy especially on early models and even though the chain is at correct tension the shaft will move around. Check the cam chain tension as per the manual. RPM at idle for the KL650 engine is between 1000 and 1200 rpm.

Progressive Fork Springs

Gino Pokluda

Probably one of the most frequently performed modifications to KLR650s is the replacement of the stock fork springs with a set of dual rate fork springs from Progressive Suspension. Most riders will agree that the front fork of the KLR650 is lightly sprung and tends to bottom and wallow when the bike is ridden with spirit. This kind of frontend behavior can become somewhat disconcerting when carrying speed through a corner whether it be paved or not. But not to worry, the fork spring swap to the new Progressive units is simple and will remedy most of your front end problems.

Progressive fork springs get their name from how the coil of the spring get tighter towards one end of the spring. This spring design allows it to compress firmly with increasing resistance as pressure builds instead of rapid compression as with a single rate spring. The Progressive springs can be purchased directly from your dealer or a catalogue. The KLR650 and the Tengai both take Progressive fork spring part number #11-128 while the KLX650 does not have Progressive fork springs available at this time. Since the fork legs will be taken off of the bike it is also a good idea to inspect the fork boots at this time for holes and cracks. My Tengai boots were about to disintegrate after 7 years and the bike had always been garaged.



To install the springs correctly, you will need to remove the fork legs from the bike. To do this you will need to get the bike upright with the front tire at least one inch off of the ground. Begin by removing the front wheel, and front brake caliper. On the Tengai, you'll need to remove the front fender also. Note the location of the top of the fork tube in the triple clamp and mark with a fine point marker on both the left and the right fork tube. Loosen the top pinch bolt and then loosen the fork tube cap on both fork tubes. With the cap loosened, loosen the rest of the pinch bolts and slide the fork legs out of the triple clamps. Place the bottom (axle) end of the fork leg in a drain pan and remove the small Philips screw from the lower end of fork leg, this is the fork oil drain plug. When the screw is removed oil will drain in a steady stream so be careful not to have oil spray all over you. The drain screw should have a

small o-ring on it. While oil is draining, remove the fork tube cap at the top of the fork leg and remove the spacer. Bend a piece of coat hanger to have a small 90 degree hook at one end to fish out the washer and fork spring. With the spring removed, pump the fork leg to get most of the oil out. Compress the fork leg and add 10w fork oil within 2 inches from the top of the tube or between 380 and 420 cc. If you want stiffer fork action, use a heavier weight oil, if you want lighter fork action use a lighter oil. 10w oil is recommended by Kawasaki.

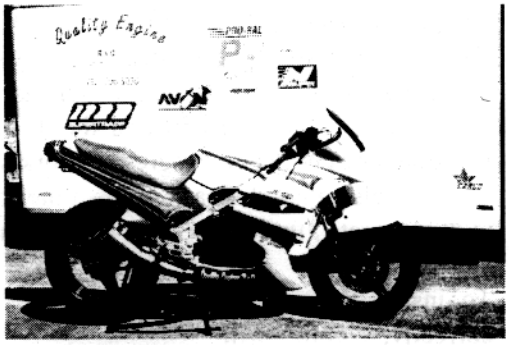
Extend the fork leg and place the spring in the tube with the tighter coils facing up. Next place the washer on the top of the spring. On the KLR650 the stock spacer must be cut down by 1 inch and on the Tengai, the stock spacer must be cut down by 1 1/2 inches or replaced with a spacer of the required length. I usually just cut the stock spacer with a lightweight tube cutter. With the spacer cut to the required length, place it in the tube and replace the tube cap. This procedure has to be repeated for the other fork leg.

Now that both fork legs are done, they can be slid back into the triple clamps. Make sure you get the fork legs in the correct sides and locate the marks you made earlier. Tighten the bottom triple clamp pinch bolts first, the tube cap and the top triple clamp pinch bolts in that order. Remount the front wheel, brake caliper, speedometer cable and fender.

Congratulations, you have just improved your front suspension dramatically over stock. Now take the bike out for a spin and see what a good front suspension feels like.

KLR770 /750

In our last issue, we discussed Steve Kesselring's wonderful KLR727 and promised to talk about his KL770 engine. The 770 is unique in two respects; one in that it resides in the chassis of an EX500 and two, it was the test bed for the KL750. "I wanted to push the engine to the limits of tolerance to see how reliable it would be. I would then back off from there and have a truly reliable engine," Steve told me. In itself, the new single powered EX is a gem of a bike with 17 inch wheels, CBR600 front end, Ohlins shock and 16 position steering damper. But, without a doubt, the eye candy in this machine is the KL770 mill which Steve installed. "The 770 has many more mods in it than the 727," Steve says. But despite the 119 added cc's, the 770 is still stone reliable. When I called Steve for this interview, he was about to jump on the EX and go on a little trip, which tells me he has the utmost confidence in the engine. The EX is set up with a huge 45 mm carb and a special ram air intake system that was needed to feed the hungry thumper. It also has to exhale which is why Steve designed the exhaust system which includes a 2.25 inch head pipe. While the EXS is no feather weight at 400+ lbs, the KL770 engine will still move the bike at 130+ mph.



The KL750 engine is the direct descendent of the 770, but don't be fooled by the smaller displacement which is directly attributed to a smaller bore. The 750 still makes a whopping 70 HP, 1 horse power less than the 770, and 50 ftlbs of torque and is more reliable because of its greater wall thickness. Steve actually uses two engine designs for the 750, one with counter balancers and one without. "You just plain eliminate alot of things spinning around in the engine when you take the counter balancers out," Steve will tell you. Steve actually rebuilt the crank with heavy metal to keep the engine dynamics the same. The problem is you sacrifice smoothness for less weight. Keep the balancers in and the job becomes easier and cheaper. Like the 727, Steve can match piston weight to the gram. It's all a matter of what a person wants out of their engine.

Also like the 727, both the 770 and 750 run stock transmissions that have been blueprinted and heavy duty clutches. No need to stop there however, Steve can rattle off a seemingly endless list of mods that he makes to the durable KL650 engine that would allow it to rival some nuclear submarines. Enhanced cooling, better oil distribution, ram air induction, you name it, all it takes is time and money.
Steve wanted me to make sure everyone knew that he is open for business and works on all engines from singles to multis. As we speak, his line of mufflers and exhaust systems are being produced, including a nice unit for the KLR. Steve will build an engine as mild or wild as you like. You say you don't want a 750cc KLR? Well, how about a milled head with the intake port arranged for radical flow or in house made valves and valve guides as well as connecting rods and pistons. Steve makes all of these as well as billet connecting rods with wrist pins and bottom ends with roller bearings. All of this as well as the 727 and 750 engine upgrades and lowering kits discussed in the NEW STUFF column are available from Quality Engine R&D (717)596-3030.

WORD FROM KAWASAKI

I used to think I had things figured out when it came to motorcycles. Whenever I talk with John Hoover at Kawasaki Motor Corp., USA, though, I always learn something new and get a better understanding of what goes on in the minds motorcycle sellers and buyers. In the latest phone interview with John, we pretty much covered the gamut of motorcycling from cruisers to sport bikes, dirt bikes to dual sports, and what goes on in the mind of various riders.

First and foremost, John wanted me to reiterate the fact that the KLR650 is a safe bet for some time to come. "The KLR650 is a well accepted model," John said when I asked if we would see its return. Furthermore, while he didn't come out and say it, I got the impression that KLR could be coming back with some much needed improvements. We also looked at where the KLR650 lived with regards to sales figures of other dual sport models. I was pleasantly surprised that the KLR was in top three in the 650cc and bigger category. So things are looking up for KL650 owners and that's good news to me since I put out this little newsletter you may have heard about.

We spent much of our time talking about the demographics and mentality of motorcycle buyers and why some segments of the market or surging out of control while others languish in low figures. The bottom line is time. Time is probably the most important element in peoples lives right now, or at least the lives of those who have the income to buy a motorcycle. Going on a dual sport ride is more of an event than throwing a leg over a cruiser and going for a putt. At first I disagreed with this, but after a while, I realized that what John had said was true. I love dual sport riding, but any true DS riding I do is planned well in advance. I make sure my gear is in order, that anything I used in the last ride is replaced and the bike is order. On a day to day basis however, the KLR or Tengai are usually fired up for my 35 mile sprint to work or a short hop to the hardware store. For me, a motorcycle is more of a tool than anything else. For the cruiser rider, however, being able to hop on a bike and ride 10 minutes to a tavern, bike shop or 7-Eleven with little preparation is the whole point. This is what has made the cruiser market explode; maximum motorcycle enjoyment in the shortest possible time. So what does this have to do with dual sports, you ask. In one sense, absolutely nothing. In another sense, everything. Everything because in today's market, the cruiser is were the bread and butter is for the motorcycle industry, and without it we as a collective whole of dirt dogs, knee draggers, and low riders would suffer.

Back on the subject of the KLR650, however, I was very encouraged after talking John that we as KLR650 lovers might be pleasantly surprised with future KLR650 models. I won't get into details nor put John on the spot, but

I will say that he was eager to hear about survey results and reader feedback regarding the KL650 A series. He also stated that there are lots of KLX650 enduro models sitting in warehouses and that's encouraging for some bargain basement deals for the non-current dirt bike. Sadly, however, we will never see the Tengai again. I guess the message I got from this phone interview was despite the low number of units sold, good things are on the horizon for the KLR650 and dual sports in general, so keep that chin up... better yet, go for a ride.

DOWN TIME

For those who tried to e-mail me during the month of February and were met with no response, my computer was down for the better part of the month. Hope this didn't cause any inconvenience. I'm back up now and can be e-mailed at ***K 650 DSN*@aol.com**.

HAVES, WANTS AND NEEDS

The current policy for placing ads in *K 650 DSN* is that any subscriber to *K 650 DSN* may advertise for one year.

1988 BMW R100GS "Bumble Bee"
27K miles. Corbin seat with back rest., PD seat and rack, Bar Backs, kick starter, parts and service books, misc extras $5 Bryan Banks (717)251-1621 or (717)251-4722 fax

1996 KLR650
1K miles, excellent condition. $3400.00. Steven Myer (803)332-6441 evenings after 7:00 p.m. South Carolina

DUAL SPORT ALLIANCE

The May/April issue of *K 650 DSN* will have the first issue of *Dual Sport Alliance*, a supplement to this newsletter that will focus on other brands of dual sports and dual sport varient bikes. *DSA* will be free until the September/October issue of *K 650 DSN* at which time it will be $2.00 extra with your subscription to *K 650 DSN*.

K 650 DSN Directory

The *K 650 DSN* directory is included in this issue and is free to all subscribers. If you are receiving this newsletter as a sample, the directory is not included. If you are a new subscriber and wish to be included in the directory, please send your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and any trips planned to *Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News*, PO Box 698, Sandia Park, NM 87047. A new directory will be published in the July/August issue.

BACK ISSUE INDEX

July/August (First issue)
Accessory list, steering head bearing maintenance, budget adventure bike

September/October
FSSNOC rally report, carb needle upgrade, IRC GP110 tire, Perilli MT21 tire, side stand safety switch, KLX650 performance upgrades, KLX650 suspension upgrades

November/December
GIVI tail rack for KLX650, Givi side bags for KLX650 and KLR650, Pelican bags for KLR650, Nonfango hard luggage, Aerostitch soft bags, Carb needle update.

January/February
Journey to the Arctic Ocean, Avon Gripster and Metzeler Enduro 3 Sahara tires, Full service tech tips, KLR727First Gear Kilimanjaro H/T Jacket and Pants.

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UPDATES

GIVI FIVE-STARS RACKS

Paul at **GIVI USA** tells me that the Five Stars racks are in. Paul will be selling racks only through dealers though, so have your local dealer give him a call to set up an account. Your dealer can reach **Givi USA** at **(704)679-4123**.

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DUAL STAR CATALOGUE

Mike and Carrie Walburn, owners of **Dual Star** have put together a great catalogue for the dual sport and adventure tour enthusiast. Some of the more intriguing items in the catalogue are the "Co-Pilot" a handlebar pack/map holder that comes off to double as a fanny pack, an exhaust shield and a center stand for the KLR650 not to mention a big selection of other off-road goodies. Mike Walburn tests all products before they are offered for sale (now that's a tough job). The center stands will be available in mid to late may, while the heat shields and Co-pilot will be available in late March or early April. To order your catalogue, call Dual Star at **(206)776-7433** and tell them you read about them in *Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News*.

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RIDE TO THE MOON

All members of the Ride To The Moon arrived in Argentina safe and sound on February 15, 1997. Two riders, Jim and Jay actually arrived earlier as the expedition split up in Peru. The riders seem to have survived the ride none the worse for wear. All of the KLR650s made it also but not without cracked and broken subframes, bent rims, leaking engine cases, bald tires and make-shift brake pads. The last leg of the trip into Ushuyia was hell for all members with freezing cold, mud, snow, wind and rain confronting them. To check out the journal entries for the entire expedition go to: **http://www.baumgartens.com/rttm/**

Congratulations to the RTTM crew from *Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News*.

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1996 KLR650 MODEL IMPROVEMENTS... Continued

During a ride on one of our nicer January days, I had to opportunity to ride Sinjin Eberle's 1997 KLR650 and gain a better impression of the improvements made to 1996-on KLR650. Compared to my 1995 model, I was able to make some judgments on the improved mechanical on the newer KLR650.

The first thing I noticed was improved and easier shifting along with better clutch pull and feel. Shifting from 1st to 2nd was much better than on my '95 while the rest of the gear range was smoother also. The late models engine also sounded quieter, as advertised in the new literature. Roll-on acceleration was better, due to the heavier crank. So Kawasaki has successfully given the KLR650 a nice upgrade, I hope this means it will be around awhile.

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STAINTUNE KLR650 MUFFLER

Staintune has long been associated with making quality stainless steel exhaust systems for BMW motorcycles, so it was somewhat of a surprise when I learned that they were making a system for the KLR650. When I talked with Jeff at Staintune, I learned that a system had already been tested and was going through Forest Service certification for the spark arrestor. Once that little detail is out of the way, the system will be offered to the general KLR650/Tengai riding public. For more information about Staintune exhaust systems, call **CBT Imports (800)782-4686**.

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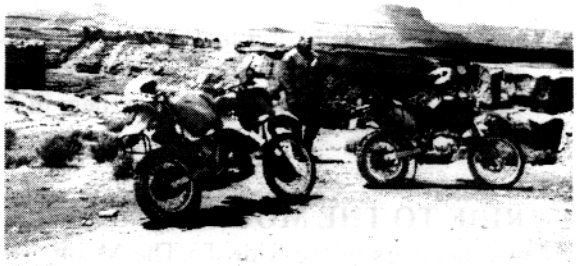
Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News

IN THE WORKS

FUEL TANK options, **SEAT** modifications, **WINDSHIELDS** , **ENGINE GUARDS, ALUMINUM PANNIERS, EXHAUST SYSTEMS** and **TANK BAGS.** Please send in any thoughts, comments or evaluations of these items for future issues.

DUAL SPORT IN UTAH GET-TOGETHER

By popular demand, we will be getting together for some dual sport riding and touring in Utah, otherwise known as "Dual Sport Heaven". I plan to arrive in Moab, Utah, midday on Saturday, April 19 and stay at the Super 8 Motel in Moab. The format for this get-together will be very flexible. The only plans I have for the group are to ride the White Rim Trail on Sunday, April 20 and have a 'Buy-Your-Own-Food-and-Drink' picnic in the public park Sunday evening after the White Rim ride. On Sunday April 20, we will meet in the parking lot of the Super 8 Motel near Denny's Restaurant at 7:30 a.m. We will leave for the White Rim Trail promptly at 8:00 a.m. On Monday, April 21, some other riders and I will be doing a two day tour of the Escalante area which will include some off-road riding. Jake Jakeman of Sagebrush Machine Shop fame will be helping me plan this tour and assures me that both camping and motels will be available. If neither of these rides sound good to you, you are free to explore as you wish, rides in the Moab area go from mild to wild with plenty of off-road and pavement touring available.



Weather conditions in this part of the country can range from extremely hot to snowing to gooey mud, so prepare accordingly. Make sure your bike is in good repair for the White Rim Trail ride as it is 130 miles long and remote. The White Rim Trail is not particularly technical with the exception of a couple of steep hills and some drop offs. You should plan on being on the trail for eight hours and have snacks and plenty of water. Should you decide that the whole White Rim ride is not your cup of tea, then there is also a shorter ride through part of the White Rim which is about 30 miles long. For those thinking of trailering a smaller enduro out to Moab, be forewarned that the White Rim trail is part of a National Park and thus your mount must be 'street legal' or have at least a license plate, headlight and brakelight.

For those wanting to get an early start on the gathering Jake Jakeman and I will be camping out at Newspaper Rock the evening of April 18 and you are more than welcome to come and pull up a rock by our campfire. You can call me at (505)281-9886 or Jake Jakeman (801)387-5575 for more details.

The riding in this area is something that must be experienced by dual sporters. I hope to see many of you there. Here are some useful numbers in the Moab area.

Super 8 Motel 800-800-8000
801-259-8868

Rodeway Inn 800-228-2000
801-259-8848

My Kawasaki 801-259-5090

Chamber of Commerce 800-635-6622